

Atkins-Jackson House
Dresden Highway (State Highway 54)
Paris
Henry County
Tennessee

HABS No. TN-180

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C.

HABS
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40-PARIS,

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

ATKINS-JACKSON HOUSE

HABS No. TN-180

Location: Dresden Highway (State Highway 54), Paris, Henry County,
Tennessee.

Latitude: 36° 17' 55"

Longitude: 88° 22' 01"

Present Owner
and Occupant: Mr. and Mrs. A. E. Jackson.

Present Use: Private residence.

Significance: The Atkins-Jackson House, built about 1846, by J.D.C. Atkins, is a good example of the large country house outside of Paris, Tennessee. The large north portico of the plantation style house is of a later date.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: Circa 1846.
2. Architect: Unknown.
3. Original and subsequent owners: The following chain of title may be established from records in the Register of Deeds and in Will Books of Henry County.

1833 Deed February 2, 1833, recorded June 5, 1833 in
Book D page 242 (302 acres)
John Ray
to
John Atkins

1847 Will [1846], recorded January, 1847 in (now lost)
Will Book G (Dower tract of 513 acres)
John Atkins
to
Mary S. Atkins (widow), William E. T. Atkins and
James K. P. Atkins (minor sons)

1856 Decree July 7, 1856, recorded August 13, 1856 in
Book M page 306 (206 plus acres)
Chancery Court
to
Mary S. Atkins

- 1864 Deed July 7, 1864, recorded July 7, 1864 in
Book O page 699 (210 acres including large brick
residence)
Mary S. Atkins
to
Mary A. Atkins (daughter)
- 1910 Will February 22, 1906, recorded March 24, 1910 in
Will Book 2 page 272
Captain Sol Jones (widower of Mary A. Atkins)
to
Miss Laura Smalley (niece)
- 1923 Deed September 25, 1923, recorded December 5, 1923 in
Book 26 page 44 (\$25,000 for house and 233 acres)
J. O. Smalley et al., administrators of estate of
Laura Smalley, deceased
to
Clinton A. Matthews and Ruby Johnson Matthews (wife)
- 1946 Deed January 19, 1946, recorded January 19, 1946 in
Book 50 page 113 (Tract 1,400 acres)
Clinton A. Matthews and Ruby Johnson Matthews (wife)
to
A. C. Jackson and Inez Q. Jackson (wife)
4. Alterations and additions: The present facade was installed in
about 1925 when the Matthews family owned the home. In 1948 the
present owner had the interior redecorated by the C. J. Stoner
Studio of New York City. (Other changes were not recorded).
- B. Historical Context: This house has been erroneously associated with
Colonel J. D. C. Atkins, who had the unusual distinction of serving in
the United States House of Representatives both before and after the
Civil War, and in the Confederate Congress during that conflict. The
property was in the Atkins family, but did not belong to the Colonel.
After the death of Colonel Atkins' father in 1846 this tract went to
his widow (stepmother of J. D. C. Atkins), who presumably had the home
built for herself and her three minor children. J. D. C. Atkins was
twenty-one years old and studying in Knoxville at the time of his
father's death; he inherited the old home and lived there until it
burned around the turn of the century.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: A large country house built during the ante-bellum period.
2. Condition of fabric: Excellent; the building is well maintained.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The building measures approximately 38.5' from north to south and 55.5' from east to west. In addition there is a 12' deep portico across the north front. It is five bays wide and two stories tall. Its plan is basically rectangular with a room addition to the south rear.
2. Foundations: Brick. There is a partial basement in the rear at the southeast corner and under the rear room addition. These foundations are poured concrete.
3. Walls: The brick exterior walls are painted white. The lower 2'-3" of the wall is stuccoed and painted white.
4. Structural system: The 13 1/2" to 14" thick brick bearing walls support wood joists and roof framing.
5. Porches: There is a tetrastyle Tuscan portico with 2'-0" diameter (twenty-four flutes) columns rising a full two stories. The columns carry a 12" entablature which is visually too shallow for the order. The porch has a wood deck, and there are three concrete risers (6 1/2" risers, 1'-7" treads) to grade. The columns are of wood. The porch roof connects to the house just below the main roof cornice. The porch roof is topped with a wood railing.
6. Chimneys: There are two chimneys on each side of the house (east and west elevations). They are all rectangular and are of brick construction covered with a stucco finish and painted white.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The main entrance doorway is centered on the north front. Its six-panel door measures 2'-11" x 6'-11" x 1 3/4", and is flanked by six-light-over-wood panel sidelights and topped with a twelve-light transom. The total composition measures 8'-11" wide x 9'-10" high. There is a

similar composition directly above the one on the first floor. The second floor doorway gives access to a small balcony with a railing that is same in design to the railing below.

On the east side there are two doors, 2'-11 1/2" x 6'-11 1/2", on the first floor. They have 3" x 4" glass lights. On the south side there is one door near the west end. It measures 2'-11" x 7'-0" and has 2" x 4" glass lights. On the one story projection there is a 2'-5" x 6'-7" door with three vertical lights over three horizontal panels.

- b. Windows: All windows have wood double-hung sash. With the exception of the windows on the south room addition, all windows measure 3'-4" x 7'-3". The other windows measure 2'-5" x 6'-7". All windows on the main block have shutters painted green.

- 8. Roof: There is a hip roof finished with green asphalt shingles. A box cornice encircles the entire house. The porch cornice ties into the main cornice but is connected off pattern.

C. Description of Interior:

- 1. Floor plans: The house has a central hall flanked by two rooms on each side. The hall runs through the house from north to south. It is a double hall with the stairway to the second floor in the front hall. There is a room addition at the south end of the house and connected to the rear hall. The rear hall has been altered with the construction of closets (there were no closets in the house originally). Off the central hall and in the northwest corner is the living room. In the northeast corner is the dining room. The den is in the southwest corner and the kitchen occupied the southeast corner. The kitchen was put in when the house was remodelled in the 1940s. A hall connects the east side to the kitchen and dining room.

The plan of the second floor is similar to the first with one chamber in each corner. A bathroom has been built at the south end of the hall and another has been built between the east bedrooms. The latter has taken space away from the bedroom occupying the northeast corner. New closets have been built into most bedrooms and the central hall. All major rooms measure about 19' x 21'.

- 2. Stairways: The open-string stairway to the second floor occupies the central hall. It is built against the west wall at the southwest corner. Ascent is made to the south. The stairway has a landing and a left turn to the second floor. Risers measure

7 1/4"; treads are 11" x 3'-3" wide. There are fourteen risers to the landing and another six to the second floor. The stairway is of plain design, and has a wood railing and rectangular 1" x 1 1/4" wood balusters.

There are four risers between the kitchen floor (rear) and the rear entrance. Another nine risers provide access to the basement.

3. Flooring: The original wood floors are found in most of the house. They are composed of 4 3/4" to 6 3/4" pine boards. The first floor hall floors have been replaced with 2 3/4" boards. Basement floor is poured concrete.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Wood lath and plaster is used throughout. The remodeled kitchen and the rear room addition have plywood paneling, and there is some tile used in the bathrooms. Ceiling height varies from 12' on the first floor to 10' on the second floor.
5. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: The interior doors measure 3'-0" x 7'-0" x 1 3/8" (varying slightly from the overall dimensions). They have four panels. The trim surrounds measure 8" on the first floor and 5 3/4" on the second.
6. Decorative features and trim: There is a 12" baseboard on the first floor; 13 1/2" on the second. The dining room has wood dado 34" above the floor. All rooms have a simple convex ceiling molding. The windows have splayed openings with wood boards on the splayed parts.

Fireplaces exist in all rooms of the original block except the kitchen and in the northeast bedroom. The first floor mantels are somewhat more elaborate than the second floor mantels. All are of wood. The dining room mantel has fluted Tuscan pilasters and an entablature with a decorative panel. The living room and den mantels have paneled pilasters and simple entablature with decorative panels. The second floor mantels are very plain, of simple board and flat trim.
7. Hardware: Standard hardware is used throughout.
8. Mechanical equipment:
 - a. Heating, ventilation: A centralized heating system has been introduced. The gas fired forced air unit is located in the basement. The fireplaces have been converted from wood burning to gas fired heat.

There are two attic fans which once provided a draw to ventilate the house.

- b. Lighting: Electrical service has been added.
- c. Plumbing: Plumbing has been furnished.

D. Site:

- 1. General setting and orientation: The building occupies an 8 acre site about 2.15 miles west of the courthouse square on Highway 54 (Dresden Highway). The site is grassed and there are several large trees. The house faces north; it is about 300 yards back from the highway.
- 2. Outbuildings: There is a frame shed directly behind the house itself; a frame three-car garage with a gable roof is situated to the southeast of the house. Several other frame structures are located about the site.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Bibliography:

- 1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Property records. Place of repository not indicated.

Prepared by: Robert C. Giebner
Project Supervisor
Historic American Buildings Survey
West Tennessee Project
August 21, 1972

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This 1972 project was the result of cooperation between the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), the Tennessee Historical Commission and the West Tennessee Historical Society. Under the direction of John Poppeliers, Chief of HABS, the written data was done by Robert C. Giebner, Project Supervisor.

Jack E. Boucher, HABS staff photographer, took the Spring 1974 photographs of the house.

Susan McCown, a HABS staff historian in the Washington, D.C. office, edited the data in the Spring of 1985 for transmittal to the Library of Congress.